

NIHILISTS AND CHRISTIANS.

One is painfully impressed, in reading Stepniak's sketches of the leading Russian revolutionists, with the difference in intensity between their nihilism and our Christianity.

When we read of Sophia Petrovskai, high born and bred, and all she did and dared for this cause to which she gave herself—of her long, patient endurance, her iron courage; of the dreadful death always staring her in the face—we may well stand and wonder, content, as we are, in giving some of our time, some of our interest, some self-denial; feeling vain of our devotedness if amounts to hard work and occasional inconvenience. Here was a rich girl, whose whole life was trial and self-abnegation, gladly undergone in this strange, frenzied philanthropy which she believed in.

And when we read of Lisogub, in his old linen coat in the bitter Russian winter, hoarding his money to the very pennies for the costly enterprises underground, costly murders—costly suicides more often still in real result—we ask ourselves what proportion we give for this philanthropy in which we believe, this religion which is able to make happy forever. Is it I, or is it Lisogub, that acts like the God-man, "who though He was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be rich?"

The picture which Jerry McAuley draws for us of a religious life as he looked upon it and supposed that all looked upon it, having never seen the lives of Christians, might well startle us into being more consecrated. He was born and reared among the wicked, and converted in Sing Sing Prison by the efforts of those peculiarly earnest Christians who give themselves to work in such places (moreover, even these he saw only in their most earnest moments.) From them and from the Bible he made his estimate of what it meant to be a servant of God, and during the months which followed he strove to give to his new Master, as a matter of common duty, that undivided service; to think not his own thoughts.

We can well believe his glowing memory of the heaven-like life which was within those penitentiary walls, shut up to silent drudgery or a cell, perhaps a word for Christ possible in two or three weeks.

No wonder that his faith was shaken, almost shattered, when he came out and saw Christians in their active life, with their Christianity the most of the time forgotten. "It was all a mistake, a dream, a falsehood; Christianity could not be true and its disciples so self-absorbed, so oblivious of their fellow-men."

I have known, also, of a converted Hindoo, visiting in this country, who almost lost his faith in seeing our shallow lives. He had thought that we were all like the missionaries or like his Christian countrymen, who could be Christians only through loss of all things, and he found us to be—what we are.

Can we not be better? Can we not rouse ourselves to this great change just as we would rouse the unconverted to become converted? By like prayer and struggle, and by that only, can we hope so to live that many will reach heaven through us.

How fearful to fail to do the best we can, to fall indeed far, far short of it, when we work in a cause where effort is success, where trying to save souls is saving them! Unlike the devotion of the nihilists—devotion which throws itself against stone walls of impossibility; which pours its lifeblood, digging its own grave in mines and tunnels which almost never accomplish their mad designs; which gathers its gains from these agonies into a bag which hath holes—unlike that devotion, ours would be repaid a hundred-fold, full measure, pressed down, and running over, in result, result, result, the coin of the lucky, in souls made forever happy; and yet we have no devotion to speak of, let the world go its way to perdition, and seem abundantly satisfied that it is so.

Self-denying consecration will not be possible in heaven. When we close our eyes on time, to open them in the exceeding glory, our opportunity to take others to that glory will be over. We are turn keys, turnkeys with a hold upon the pardoning power of the King; we keep the doors which shut men into hopelessness; we can release many if we will. Shall we leave them all locked in?—*Margaret Meredith.*

ORDER OF MERIT.

A society in France for the prevention of cruelty to animals has founded an order of merit, insignia of which are bestowed on dogs who distinguish themselves by deeds of bravery. A tastefully designed collar of honor is awarded. Among the animals decorated, one of the most celebrated is Bacchus, a large bull-dog, whose specialty is to stop runaway horses by jumping up and seizing them by the bridle. It is said that the intelligent beast has already saved the lives of eight persons in this way. Pataud, another bull-dog, received a collar in 1887 for saving his mistress from the attack of a foot-pad; and Turk, a splendid Newfoundland, has had a similar honor conferred on him for saving three young children from drowning, on as many occasions.

AN ESSAY.

(Read at one of our K. C. meetings at Burns' Chapel by Miss Retta Bright.)

The spirit is the intelligent, immaterial, and immortal part of man, the soul in distinction from the body in which it resides, the agent or subject of vital and spiritual functions, whether spiritual or material. God's law is spiritual, it is a transcript of the divine nature, and extends its authority to the acts of the soul of man. The spiritual Christians and those most advanced in knowledge and piety, are still exposed to temptation, and liable to fall in aggravated sins. This should make them kind and compassionate toward all sinners, and active in efforts to reclaim them, "for to be carnally minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace."

It should make them also watchful, humble, prayerful; remembering that but for the grace of God they might have been among the chief of sinners. If there is a natural body there is also a spiritual body. There is a spirit in man and the inspiration of the Almighty giveth it understanding. He that hath the spiritual life may walk through the valley and shadow of death and fear no evil.

But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned. But he that is spiritual judgeth all things yet he himself is judged of no man. "We through the Spirit wait for the hope of righteousness by faith." This I say then, "walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh." For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh: and those are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would. But if ye be led of the Spirit, ye are not under the law. "The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance: against such there is no law." "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who hath blessed us with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places in Christ."

MY SMOKE-HOUSE.

A man who lives in Albany, and whose business is that of a clerk, said that he had lately built a house that cost him three thousand dollars. His friends expressed their wonder that he could afford to build so fine a dwelling.

"Why," said he, "that is my smoke-house."

"Your smoke-house? Why what do you mean?"

"Why, I mean that twenty years ago I left off smoking, and I have put money saved from smoke, with interest, into my house. Hence, I call it my smoke-house."